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CHRIST
IS RISEN!

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CONTENTS

43 Saint John of Kronstadt and the Spiritual Crisis of Russia *by I. M. Kontsevich*
58 Father Herman's Easter Visitation *by Gleb Podmoshensky*
62 The Icons of the Great Feasts: The Annunciation of the Most Holy Mother of God *by Eugene Rose*
66 Christians! You Must Know Christ! *by Bishop Ignaty Brianchaninov*
73 Orthodoxy in the Contemporary World
75 New Books

ILLUSTRATIONS Cover, courtesy of the Memorial Fund of St. John of Kronstadt (see back cover). Page 42: photograph of St. John from *Two Days in Kronstadt* (reprinted Jordanville, N.Y., 1960). Page 49: first icon of St. John with inscription in English, line-engraving, Fr. Herman Brotherhood. Page 58: photograph of Fr. Gerasim from *150th Anniversary of the Russian Orthodox Church in America*, New York, 1945. Page 61: Spruce Island hermitage of Fr. Gerasim and chapel, line-engraving, Fr. Herman Brotherhood. Page 63: icon of the Annunciation, published by the Zoe Brotherhood of Theologians, Athens.

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CHRIST IS RISEN!

This greeting, *a light that shines in the darkness, and the darkness grasped it not*, has reached almost all corners of the earth, changing men whose hearts have yealded to it into transfigured beings. Simple fishermen became philosophers and theologians, Princes of the Church; early believers became witnesses and martyrs, the seed of Christianity; intellectuals, the bloom of great civilizations, learning of this greeting withdrew into deserted wastelands only to be recipients of otherworldliness, of the Holy Spirit. These deified men became the lamps of God's Light and shine in the darkness of "this world".

But the world does not change, for it lies in evil. The spiritual darkness over the sky of today's world only thickens and swells, ominous of the approaching night. Yet even the modern world has produced in its darkness more martyrs than all the periods of pagan persecutions, and it has seen some of the greatest holy men in the history of Orthodox Christianity.

Thus the Easter Message is still heard and still finds its witnesses who alight with the flame of Christ's Resurrection, shed the Light of His Truth in the gathering darkness. They, and all who follow them on the path of the "science of sciences", the science of *spiritual activity* known and practiced in the Orthodox Church, receive a knowlege beyond the capacity of human nature, a taste of paradise already in this earthly life, and out of personal experience exult in joy --

IN TRUTH CHRIST IS RISEN!

ST. JOHN (SERGIEFF) OF KRONSTADT
1829 - 1908

More perhaps than any other Russian Saint, St. John embodies the joyful radiance of the Easter Feast, so much so that he was called by the Russian people the Paskhalny Batiushka, *which might be translated "the priest of the paschal joy". The Church celebrates his memory twice a year, on Oct. 19 and Dec. 20.*

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SAINT JOHN OF KRONSTADT

AND THE SPIRITUAL CRISIS OF RUSSIA

By I. M. KONTSEVICH

While several articles on the life and spirituality of this newly-canonized Saint of the Orthodox Church have now appeared in English, the following is the first to trace the spiritual tradition of which he was a part and to place him in historical perspective. The author, a graduate of St. Sergius Academy in Paris and a noted Russian theologian, wrote The Acquisition of the Holy Spirit in Ancient Russia *and is currently writing a book on the Startsi of Optina.*

INTRODUCTION

Every kingdom divided against itself is
brought to desolation; and every city or house
divided against itself shall not stand.
St. Matt. 12:25

NEVER BEFORE has so much been spoken and written[1] about any of the saints or righteous men as about Father John of Kronstadt. For this reason we shall set ourselves the task, not so much of painting a complete picture of him -- for this is well known to us all -- as of characterizing his epoch and elucidating the historical significance of the person of Father John. We shall touch only in part on him himself and his works.

Father John lived at the time when the spiritual crisis which Russia was undergoing was reaching its high point: a fatal bifurcation reigned in all spheres of life in the Empire. On one side, the spiritual revival in the ascetic tradition which began in the 19th century and embraced believing Russians, was sending out its abundant shoots; on the other side, the overwhelming majority of society was in the grasp of an opposing current of atheistic and revolutionary activity foreign to the Russian people, coming from the West.

1. *I.e.*, in Russian; the reader should keep in mind throughout that the article was originally addressed to Russians (*trans. note*).

Father John was entirely a product of the movement of spiritual revival, he was entirely in its spirit and light; and the wave of this revival raised Father John to the very height of its crest. The Lord placed high upon a candlestand this His brightly-burning lamp.

The other wave of godlessness and destruction, the wave of the spirit of antichrist, raised to its height Lev Tolstoy, who indeed became its generally-acknowledged prophet. Father John rose up powerfully and sternly against the enemies of the Church and the government, unceasingly accusing them, calling to repentance, warning of Divine chastisement. It was in this that his prophetic calling and office lay.

We shall pass now to a more detailed consideration of our subject.

I
FATHER JOHN IN THE SPIRIT AND POWER OF THE HOLY FATHERS

> I am come to send fire on the earth;
> and what will I, if it be already kindled?
> St. Luke 12:49

The Path to Holiness

After the reforms of Peter the Great and those that followed them, directed against monasticism, there came an epoch of decline in Russian monasticism; but already in the 19th century a spiritual revival is to be noted. For this the foundation was laid by Archimandrite Paisy Velichkovsky: beginning in the second half of the 18th century he occupied himself with translations from Greek into Slavonic of the ascetic works of the holy Fathers (the *Philokalia*) and revived in his monastery in Moldavia the ascetic tradition of the ancient Near East. In this ascetic tradition, the center of gravity lay not in external but in internal ascetic endeavor (*podvig*), namely in overcoming the "old man", in attaining passionlessness. Immediate encounter with God -- the acquisition of the Holy Spirit" -- was the final end of all ascetic endeavors. In connection with this there was reestablished the system of spiritual direction by elders (*startsi*).

The revival of monasticism in Russia is connected also with the name of Gabriel, Metropolitan of St. Petersburg. In 1793 he published the *Philokalia*; besides that he appointed the students of Paisy as rectors of many Russian monasteries, and they also reintroduced into monastic ascetic discipline the ancient tradition which had been almost forgotten in Russia before this.

In this period of revival a throng of holy ascetics appeared. To the early period belongs one of the greatest saints -- St. Seraphim of Sarov (1759-1833). St. Seraphim was directed to Sarov by Starets Dosifei, who had a spiritual connection with Paisy Velichkovsky. Dosifei commanded St. Seraphim to perform unceasingly the Jesus Prayer. In the Sarov forest St. Seraphim practiced the ascetic life together with Fr. Mark and Abbot Nazary, who in his time had been called by Metropolitan Gabriel to Petersburg as advisor in the correction of obscure passages in the Slavonic translation of the *Philokalia*, being chosen for his personal knowledge of the spiritual life. One must presume that Fr. Nazary took the *Philokalia* to Sarov. "The gift of holiness which St. Seraphim possessed,"--as the well-known Church historian Kartashev has said, --"like 'every gift from above,' came 'from the Father of Lights,' while the personal attainments of the Saint came from that vivifying stream of the Russian ascetic revival, along which the Saint formed the desire to conduct the ship of his life."

Father John Sergiev was born in 1829, not long before the death of St. Seraphim, and, like him, he formed the desire to conduct the ship of his life along the same luminous and abundant current of spiritual revival. We do not know who among the clergy was especially close to Fr. John while he was studying in the Academy, or who his confessor was. Or were his teachers books alone? One may positively state that at that period there was no scarcity of experienced ascetic-directors; they could be found anywhere. Likewise one ascetic work after another began to appear in print. That was the time of the full bloom of the spiritual revival.

At about this time the students of the followers of Starets Paisy became concentrated primarily at Optina Monastery, which became a spiritual center and was made famous by its clairvoyant startsi and its works of enlightenment. Beginning in 1847 a group of professors and writers, under the direction of Starets Makary, translated from Greek and published works of the holy Fathers. Their activity -- the dissemination of patristic literature -- coincided with the academic years of Fr. John (1851-55) and the first years of his priesthood.

At the same time near Petersburg Archimandrite Ignaty Brianchaninov (1807-1867) was serving as rector in the Sergieva Hermitage which he had reestablished. His was the attractive and fascinating figure of a true ascetic. At the beginning of the reign of Nicholas I he graduated from the College of Military Engineering at the head of his class, being

one of the Empress' scholarship students and a favorite of the Emperor; but he preferred monastic endeavor to the brilliant worldly career that lay open before him.

Archimandrite Ignaty was a student of the Optina starets Lev (Leonid) and author of the *Ascetic Works* in which, basing himself on the teaching of the holy Fathers, he set forth the path of the "interior activity"[1] and cautioned against deception. As a writer Archimandrite Ignaty had command of a rare literary talent and a poetic gift. Already while Fr. John was a priest in Kronstadt, to be precise in 1858, Archimandrite Ignaty was consecrated bishop and left for Stavropol. After him the rector at Sergieva Hermitage[2] was Archimandrite Ignaty Malyshev, his favorite student, who received the spirit of his teacher. The connection of Fr. John with Sergieva Hermitage in his youth is known, and it did not cease afterwards: on the death of Fr. Ignaty Malyshev in 1898 Fr. John read for him the prayer on the departure of the soul.

Another outstanding contemporary of Fr. John was Bishop Theophan Vyshensky (the Recluse, 1811-1894), who worked about 20 years (1873-1890) on the Russian translation of the *Philokalia* and through his writings and letters guided the believing part of his generation. While still a hieromonk he was an inspector at the Saint Petersburg Academy. This was between 1856 and 1858, that is, after Fr. John's residence there. When Fr. Theophan, on his return from the Holy Land, became rector of the Academy, he was too late to find Fr. John there. Thus it is possible that they never met face to face.

Nonetheless it is known that Bp. Theophan later, from his seclusion, warned Fr. John about the dangers of the path he had chosen: to be a healer of the sick outside the walls of a monastery, without the monastic experience and obedience.

This exceptional path, however, was not chosen by Fr. John arbitrarily. Illarion, a contemporary of St. Seraphim, while leading the ascetic life in the Reshminsky Hermitage started him on this path through the staritsa Paraskeva Ivanovna Kovrigina. Fr. Illarion told her: "The time has come for you to leave your home and set out on the path of good. Go to Kronstadt; there a new light of the Church of Christ

1. *I.e.*, the practice of the Jesus Prayer (*trans. note*).

2. Sergieva Hermitage is situated near the city of Oranienbaum, which is on the road from Kronstadt to Petersburg. (It was here where Father Herman of Alaska had first entered monasticism. *Trans. note.*)

has begun to shine -- Fr. John! Go and serve him! My blessing will be with you." According to Fr. John's own words this staritsa persuaded him to pray for healing of the sick.

Although Fr. John served as a priest in the world and was not a monk, his inner life was entirely one of monastic asceticism, in accordance with the traditions of the holy Fathers. He constantly spoke of the interior spiritual activity, of the "unseen warfare"-- not only against the passions, but also against "the subcelestial spirits of evil", of "the prayer of the heart" and the power and efficacy of the "Name of Jesus". He related in detail his own spiritual activity in his "Conversation" of Dec. 12, 1900, on the occasion of the 45th anniversary of his ordination as priest. Here he touched on the first steps of the path of his spiritual warfare. But self-examination, knowledge of himself, constant prayer,-- these were the occupation of his whole life to the very end. The most profound humility was his shield and visor: "In my body I am earth and ashes, but my soul lives and rests only in God. He is the lucidity of my thoughts and the strength of my heart; I myself am nothing."

Here is what Fr. John says of himself in the above-mentioned 'Conversation'. "Once ordained a priest and pastor, I soon learned through experience with whom I had entered into combat in my spiritual arena, namely with the powerful, cunning, unsleeping prince of this world, who breathes evil and perdition and the fire of hell, and with the subcelestial spirits of evil... This battle with the strong and cunning invisible enemy plainly showed me how many infirmities, weaknesses, and sinful passions there were in me,-- how strong a hold the prince of this world had over me, and how I had to struggle hard with myself, with my sinful inclinations and habits, and conquer them, so as to be as far as possible invulnerable to the arrows of the enemy.

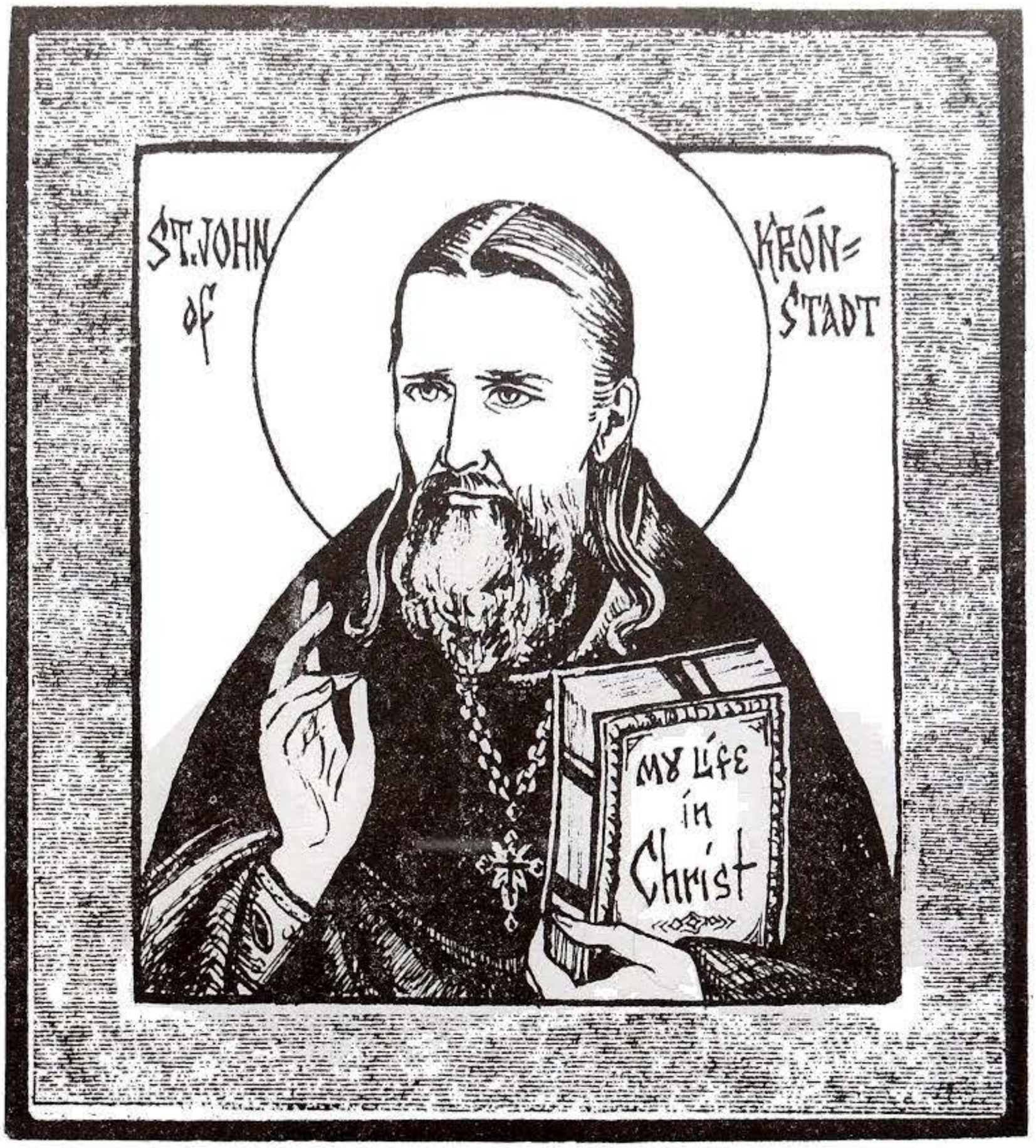
"The spiritual warfare began, and with it watchfulness over oneself, the sharpening of spiritual sight, teaching oneself uninterrupted secret prayer and the invocation of the All-saving Name of Christ; like the Psalmist, the Prophet-king David, I have come constantly to 'lift up' the heart's 'eyes unto the hills'--to heaven, from whence has come to me manifest, quick, powerful 'help' (Ps. 103:1-3), and my mighty enemies have been put to flight while I have obtained freedom and peace of soul...

"This warfare has continued within me up to now; and the long period of spiritual warfare has given me much and especially experienced

knowledge of all the subtleties of the spiritual warfare, of all the innumerable wiles of the invisible enemies and the firm, always certain invocation of the Name of the Lord Jesus, before which they cannot stand. In this unseen warfare I have come to know the perpetual nearness to me of the Lord, His immeasurable goodness, His quick hearing, the infinite holiness of His being, for which 'an unrighteous thought is abomination' (Proverbs 15:26), as is a single momentary desire for sin, or pleasure in sin; the holiness of God irrevocably and unfailingly seeks and asks of all of us holiness in our thoughts, holy fervor in our feelings, holiness in every movement of our will, in our words, in our deeds. In this warfare I have come to know the immensity of God's long-suffering to us; for He alone knows all the infirmity of our fallen nature, which He mercifully took upon Himself, except for sin (I Peter 2:22; Isaiah 53:9; I John 3:5, 4:10; Hebrews 4:15), and therefore He commanded us 'seventy times seven' times to forgive the sins (St. Matt. 18: 22) of those who have fallen into them; and He has surrounded and continues to surround me every day with the joys of salvation from sin in peace and expansion of the heart. The Divine mercy which I have experienced and the perpetual nearness to me of the Lord confirm me in the hope of my eternal salvation and in that of those who follow and hear me to salvation, according to the word of the Scriptures, 'Behold I and the children which God hath given me'" (Hebrews 2:13; Isaiah 8:18).

Subsequently Fr. John speaks of how, "serving in full splendor marvellous Divine services and receiving daily the most holy and life-giving sacrament," he felt within himself "its life-givingness for soul and body, its victory over sin and death, justification, peace, freedom, boldness of spirit." Thus, through the interior activity and "daily concentrated and reverent service of the Liturgy," Fr. John mounted from strength to strength and became worthy of ever greater gifts of the Holy Spirit.

According to the word of the Apostle: "... for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ"(Eph. 4:12),"...God hath set some in the Church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps..."(I Cor. 12:28). All these gifts, as we know, were poured out in abundance on Fr. John, and they testify to his holiness. In this brief sketch we will not touch on his clairvoyance, his working of miracles, or the innumerable healings he performed, but will pass on to his works, about which we will say a few words.



The Theology of Father John

In his works Fr. John was inspired by the primary Orthodoxy of the holy Fathers.

Orthodoxy is not an abstract philosophy, nor a doctrine of human intellect, yet it is founded on the Gospel; it is not merely a particular form of worship, or rite, dogma, way of life,--but the living bond with God, authentic life in the Holy Spirit, in the Church which is nothing else than the truth of the Gospel, opened to us by the Divinely-inspired works of the holy Fathers and the decisions of the Ecumenical Councils. The Church of which Christ Himself is the head and which is directed here on earth by hierarchs who are successors of the Apostles, is the Mystical Body of Christ, in which the Holy Spirit forms, vivifies, gathers together, and unites all. In her all is harmoniously and organically bound together as in a living organism: thus theology and asceticism, spirituality and podvig, are inseparable. Dogma conditions asceticism, and inversely, in ascetic practice dogma reveals itself.

Thus the theology contained in Fr. John's works flows directly from his ascetic practice. It is theocentric and appears as a rebirth of the spirit of the ancient holy Fathers. A theology of this sort, joined to personal holiness, is born of inspiration from above and is distinguished by its character from the theological constructions of the scientific mind. Fr. John taught only what he knew from personal experience, and his education and knowledge only broadened his mental horizon and made it possible for him to find forms of expression.

The works of Fr. John are free from the Western influences of humanism or moralism. Being himself a living vessel of the Holy Spirit, he drank from the same source from which the holy Fathers had drunk and thus threw out a bridge from the ancient spirit-bearing epoch to our time. Those closest to him were not his contemporaries, but such fathers and teachers as John Chrysostom (4th c.) or Simeon the New Theologian (10th c.),[1] and also the author of *On Life in Christ*, Nicholas Cabasilas (14th c.).

If the diary of Fr. John's mystical experience--*My Life in Christ*--may be compared to a pile of multi-colored gems, the book of Cabasilas, *On Life in Christ*, is an unbroken golden chain of equal, interconnected links of logical arguments which flow one from another. It is a harmonious philosophical system

Metropolitan[2] Nicholas Cabasilas (d. 1371) took in his youth an active part in the political and court life of the stormy epoch under the Paleologues and the Cantacuzenes. He participated in the famous hesychast controversy and was on the side of Gregory Palamas, whom he revered. His treatise on *The Chatter of Nicephorus Gregoras* (preserved in manuscript) testifies to his negative attitude toward the opponents of hesychasm.

Nicholas Cabasilas was an outstanding ecclesiastical writer. His chief works were *On Life in Christ* and *A Commentary on the Divine Liturgy*. The first of these was translated from German into Russian by the priest M. Bogolyubsky and published in 1874 in St. Petersburg. The second was included in the collection of *Writings of the Holy Fathers and Teachers of the Church Relating to Commentary on the Divine Services*, Vol. 3, St. Peters-

1. Archpriest M. Pomazansky, "St. Simeon the New Theologian and Fr. John of Kronstadt on the Church and Grace," in *The Orthodox Path* (in Russian), Jordanville, N.Y., 1957.
2. Catholic scholars have established that Nicholas Cabasilas was not Archbishop of Thessalonica, as historians have previously considered him to be; the Orthodox scholar Archimandrite Cyprian (Kern) calls Cabasilas Metropolitan of Dirrachys.

burg, 1857;[1] in manuscript it is preserved in the National Library in Paris, in a handwritten copy made by the Athonite monk Ioasaf--the former Emperor John Cantacuzene, who on the title-page names his friend "the most wise, most learned, and holy among the holy."

Catholic scholars speak of *On Life in Christ* thus: "It is full of material from the Holy Scriptures and the Fathers, and all is bound into a precise doctrine by a powerful speculative mind, subject to a serene piety. Simeon of Thessalonica, the best of succeeding liturgists, made use of him and imitated him, but with less talent and endowment." One must presume that Fr. John was acquainted with these works of Metropolitan Nicholas Cabasilas; they are in harmony with his own spirit.

Nicholas Cabasilas develops the idea that the Christian should already in this perishing world begin the life which attains perfection only after death. Life consists of union with Christ and is accomplished through the sacraments: "Only under the action of the sacraments may organs be developed for the apprehension of spiritual life, and it is they that will make it possible on Judgement Day for one to enter into communion with Christ."

In the first chapter of Cabasilas' work is a concise discussion of the sacraments: Baptism, Chrismation, the Eucharist. Among the sacraments he singles out the Eucharist; one can always find parallel passages in Fr. John's works. It is well-known that Fr. John, like Cabasilas, spoke about the Eucharist more than about anything else; *My Life in Christ* is entirely penetrated and animated by a liturgical point of view. "As far as is known to us from the history of the Church," as one writer has said, "never has anyone so rapturously served, loved, adored, and praised the Divine Liturgy as did Fr. John of Kronstadt. It is doubtful if even John Chrysostom, that great teacher of the Church, was so enraptured by the Liturgy, spoke so much of it, or so much drew men to it by his own rapture and by his words, as blessed Fr. John." He spoke thus: "That the Lord is always with us is clearly proved to anyone who serves His Divine, life-giving Mysteries: here He allows us to touch Him, to put the hands of our heart into His nail-wounds and to put our fingers into His side."

Having given a general idea of the meaning of the sacraments in his first chapter, Cabasilas in the following chapters discusses each of

1. *A Commentary on the Divine Liturgy* has recently appeared in an English translation by J. M. Hussey and P. A. McNulty, published in London by the S.P.C.K., 1960 (*trans. note*).

them separately and devotes the last two chapters: the sixth, to the means, drawn from the sacraments, whereby the life in Christ may be maintained; and the seventh, to the transfiguration of the soul that is accomplished under the action of the sacraments.

Let us quote several indicative passages, which testify to the affinity of soul of two Orthodox theologians who were separated from each other by six centuries.

Speaking of how "here on earth the spiritual life consists of the most intimate union with Christ," Cabasilas clarifies the intimacy of this union. He says: "In the Scriptures there are indicated allegories or parables of this union: now a house and its inhabitants, again a vine and branches, now head and members, again a marriage; but none of them is equal to this union, for it cannot be expressed in words, since it is much stronger than the bond which is cited in any allegory."

Fr. John repeats over and over in poetic images: "God is my being, my breath, my light, my strength..." "Consider how great is man," he says; "God dwells in him and he in God," so that in a pious Christian there lives not merely a man, but Christ Himself: "'Yet not I live, but Christ liveth in me' (Gal. 2:20), because the whole soul becomes of Christ, as iron on burning coals becomes all fiery, becoming itself like burning coals,--all is fire, all is light, all is warmth!"

Cabasilas further explains that Christ in the spiritual life is "All in all": "Being feeder, He is at the same time food; He provides the bread of life, and is Himself what He provides. He is life for the living, peace for those who breathe, clothing for those who desire to be clothed. By Him alone can we walk, and He is also the Path, and what is more a resting-place on the path, and its end."

"How near to us has the Lord come through the Incarnation," says Fr. John; "we eat and drink Him, breathe Him, are clothed in Him! --Oh, what a marvellous clothing, excellent, incorruptible, most peaceful, sweet, bright, warm, strengthening the soul..." "The Divine Liturgy is in truth a heavenly service on earth, during which God Himself in a special, most near and intimate way, is present and dwells with men, being Himself the unseen Celebrator, offering and being offered."

"*My Life in Christ*"

Fr. John's work, *My Life in Christ*, is the diary of a contemplative, notations of illuminations and revelations, the prayerful striving of a soul to God and a real meeting with Him: "The eyes of the Master in the Temple of God are turned to each of us," said Fr. John; "the heart of the Master is turned to each of us! Can one ask for greater nearness? When you stand at prayer weighed down by many sins and overcome with despair, begin to pray with hope and with a fervent spirit, call to mind that the Spirit of God Himself assists us in our infirmities, interceding for us with inexpressible sighings. When you call to mind with faith this action of the Spirit of God in us, tears of tender feeling will flow from your eyes and you will feel in your heart peace, sweetness, justification, and joy in the Holy Spirit, you will cry with the voice of your heart: Abba, Father."

Fr. John spoke with inspiration of the Church, both as eternal Truth and as the Body of Christ, and thus of her uniqueness and the unity in her of all members through Christ: "The Church is the eternal Truth, because it is united to Christ the Truth and animated by the Spirit of Truth. 'I am with you alway' (St. Matt. 28:20); the Church is His Body, as the Apostle says."

"'I am the Vine,' said the Lord, 'ye are the branches' (St. John 15:5), *i.e.*, the one holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. Thus just as the Lord is holy, so is the Church holy; just as the Lord is 'the Way, the Truth, and the Life' (St. John 14:6), so too is the Church, because the Church is one with the Lord, she is 'His body, of His flesh, and of His bones' (Eph. 5:30), or His branches, rooted in Him the living Vine and taking nourishment from Him and growing in Him. Never imagine the Church as separate from the Lord Jesus Christ, from the Father and the Holy Spirit."

Fr. John returned to the patristic understanding of the Church as life in the sacraments; the mystery of the Church is revealed in the Holy Eucharist, in which is the concentration of Christian existence:

"The Liturgy is spirit and life; its idea: 'that all may be one' (St. John 17:21) in Christ; one must carry everyone in one's heart, pray sincerely for all. Man, as the image of God, is immeasurably loved by God; man is the fallen image of God, restored by the extreme suffering for him

of the Son of God. Thanks to the Holy Trinity, Who has saved us! Man is continually restored, renewed, saved by the most pure Body and Blood of Christ, and deified. The Liturgy is the greatest miracle of the goodness and mercy of the omnipotent Lord God, a constant miracle: we should always be present at its performance, with joy and fear, with love for God and for one another. During thc Liturgy heavenly powers are always invisibly serving."

Fr. John calls all to *simplicity*, to the restoration of *the integrity of the personality*.

> Before his fall Adam was entirely concentrated interiorly by the Divine grace present in him and turned in his creative activity toward God in perfect love for Him and in fulfillment of His Divine will. He was entirely in a state of communion with and contemplation of God. In him all manifestation of the tripartite composition of the human being (*i. e.*, spirit, soul, and body) were harmoniously united and hierarchically subordinated to the higher principle in man -- his spirit. The spirit ruled over all, turning all toward a single higher aim. The first-created man was entirely penetrated with the grace of the Holy Spirit and entirely illuminated. The elements of the world could not harm man, and he was immortal.

Sin--this sting of death--brought into human existence the poison of ruin and decomposition. The Divine grace which had protected him and collected him into one, now left him. Then all the powers of the soul came into disorder and contradiction: body rose up against spirit -- the slave against its lord. Thus was the order of the soul deformed and there arose the distorted man -- the man of sin.

Passion is something new, introduced from without, the striving of previous qualities and capacities away from the right toward the wrong. Thus, a higher manifestation of the spirit -- its capacity for striving upward, to God -- when it lost communion with the Divinity turned downward and changed into love for oneself and for everything lower and created.

The aim of asceticism is the restoration of the lost integrity of the personality. "The chief characteristic of the religious mind," as I. V. Kireyevsky[1] has said, basing himself on the Fathers, "consists of striving to collect all the powers of the soul into one power. One must seek that inner concentration of existence, where reason and will, feeling and conscience, goodness and truth, wonder and desire, justice and mercy, and the whole orientation of the mind are poured together into a single living

1. A Russian philosopher of the 19th century who assisted Starets Makary of Optina in editing and publishing Starets Paisy Velichkovsky's translations of the Fathers (*trans. note*).

unity, and thus the essential personality of man is restored in its original indivisibility, which is manifested in simplicity; for simplicity is the consequence of the unity of all the powers of the human soul, of this integrity of the personality and striving toward the good and complete turning away from evil."

Of simplicity Fr. John spoke constantly. Its principle is in God:

"The uniquely simple Spirit in three Hypostases, the unique Wisdom in three Persons, has brought all from non-existence into existence. The unique tri-hypostatic Wisdom is God."

"Love without reflection: love is simple. Love never errs. In the same way without reflection believe and hope: for faith and hope are that simple. Or even better: God, in Whom we believe and on Whom we hope, is simple Being in the same way that He is simple Love. Amen."

"The Lord is so holy, so simple in His holiness, that a single evil or impure thought deprives us of God the sweet and most sweet, pure and most pure peace and light of our souls. Hence the saints are all light, all one fragrance, like the light of the sun, like the purest air. Lord, grant me this simple holiness."

"In prayer and in every action of your life flee suspiciousness and doubt and diabolical imaginings. May the eye of your soul be simple, so that it may illuminate all your prayer, all your deeds, and your whole life."

"Our soul is simple, like thought, and swift, like thought and like lightning."

"Call without doubting, in the simplicity of your heart, on the Lord God, and on the angels and saints, who by Divine grace and by communion or union with God and by the simplicity of their being are extraordinarily swift, like lightning, and hear and fulfill our prayers in accordance with the will of God."

"...May we be simple, may we walk in simplicity of heart with everyone! Let us remember our high calling and chosenness, and may we unswervingly strive toward the honor of our higher Divine calling in Christ. We are the children of God, and heirs of Christ" (Rom. 8 :16, 17).

"Our soul is a simple being, and thus it cannot at one and the same time love both God and, for example, money" (St. Luke 16: 13, St. Matt. 6: 24).

"Our soul is a simple being, as the image and likeness of God... And so, do always the will of God and you will be simple and at peace."

"Try to attain to the simplicity of a child in your dealings with men and in prayer to God. Simplicity is man's greatest good and dignity. God is completely simple, because He *is* completely spiritual, completely good. And may your own soul not be divided between good and evil."

From simplicity flows *unity in love*. This unity of all rational beings is rooted in God. God by nature is one, and all that is in God is one with Him. Fr. John said: "Just as the Trinity, our God, is one Being, although also three Persons, so should we too *be one*. As our God is simple, so should we too be simple, as simple as if we were all one man, one mind, one will, one heart, one goodness without the least admixture of evil -- in other words, one pure love, as God is Love. 'That they may be one, even as We are one'" (St. John 17:22).

"God is He Who is. In Him all holy, rational, and free creatures are one. 'As Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us.' I am nothing: God is everything in me and God is in everyone, and for everyone God is everything. 'Our Father, Who art in heaven.' Pay no attention to the disturbances, divisions, and enmity of the demons. Repeat: all is *one*. Say: we are *one*."

We are members of the one Body of Christ -- the Church, from whence is our unity, which is effectively realized in the Eucharist: "How long," asks Fr. John, "will the holy Mysteries which we receive remind us that 'we being many are one body' (I Cor. 10:17), and yet there will be no heartfelt natural union among us, as members of the one Body of Christ?..."

Calling all to unity, Fr. John showed that the cause of divisions is sin and the passions: "Attain unity, oh man," he said, "in every way flee the spiritual division that comes through self-love, pride, envy, love of money, doubt, small faith... Union is God. Division is the devil. Church divisions are the work of the devil; heresy and schism are the work of the devil."

These profound thoughts of Fr. John concerning unity have a special meaning in our decadent age when faith and love have grown weak and as a consequence there have arisen church quarrels and schisms. These have been possible only because we have completely lost the understanding of the Church as the unique Mystical Body of Christ, and we have forgotten that apostasy from it draws with it a doom similar to that which a branch suffers when it is cut off from the tree, for thus the current of grace is stopped.

According to St. John Chrysostom, the whole responsibility for schism is borne not only by its perpetrators, or by the hierarchs and clergy of the schismatic body, but also by all laymen who follow them, since they support the schism.

Not a few of the reflections scattered among the pages of Fr. John's diary are devoted to the mystery of holiness: "...For the saints, all is God, since the saints are true gods. 'I,' God Himself, Whose word is truth, 'have said, ye are gods'" (Ps. 81:6).

Many times Fr. John theologized on God the Word, and on the reality of the word: "Remember that in the word itself is contained also the possibility of the deed; one need only have firm faith in the power of the word, in its creative capacity. In God the deed is inseparable from the word; not one word will return to Him without power: 'No word from God shall be void of power' (St Luke 1:37). Thus it should be with us too, for we are images of the Word, and the Word has become most intimately united to us through the Incarnation, deifying us and accepting us as communicants of the Divine nature."

"Rational being! Remember that you have your beginning from the Word of the Creator of all and in union (through faith) with the creative Word; by means of faith you can yourself be a material and spiritual creator..."

"...If you...speak the words of a prayer with feeling, your words will not return to you empty, powerless (like a shell without a kernel), but they will unfailingly bring you the very fruits that are contained in the word, like fruit in its integument! But if you waste words, scatter them without faith, without feeling their power, like a shell without the kernel, they will return to you just as empty. Throw out a husk, and the husk returns."

Fr. John touches on many other topics as well, but we will close with this and pass on to his prophetic office and the significance of this office as the Russian people's last warning and call to repentance by God before the terrible Divine chastisement.

The second and last part of this essay, THE PROPHETIC OFFICE OF FATHER JOHN, *is a self-contained article in its own right; it will appear later this year in* The Orthodox Word.

FATHER HERMAN'S

ARCHIMANDRITE GERASIM in front of the chapel in the village of Ouzinkie on Spruce Island, at the time of the events described in the accompanying article.

About a hundred years ago the rumor reached Valaam monastery, located on an island in Lake Ladoga, that one of the former residents of the monastery, the monk Herman, who left as a missionary to Alaska in the time of Catherine the Great, was revered there as a saint. It was said that he had led a holy life and passed away in Alaska as a real saint. The abbot at Valaam then was the venerable Father Damascene. He quickly established contact with Alaska, and they started sending him information on the life and deeds of the blessed and humble monk Herman. With this information as a basis, a brief biography of him was soon compiled, and it, up to the present day, is the main source of information about this clairvoyant representative of Holy Russia and certain candidate for canonization as a saint of the Russian Orthodox Church.

Of extraordinary interest is one of his prophecies. It was fulfilled in our time, and in fact we are witnesses of it. Bishop Peter of New Archangel (Sitka), Vicar of the Kamchatka diocese, reported in his "Information on Father Herman" on May 21, 1867, the following prediction: *Still more he (Fr. Herman) used to say that although a long time would pass after his death, he would not be forgotten, and the place where he used to live would not be deserted, that*

EASTER VISITATION

a monk like himself, fleeing worldly glory, would come and live on Spruce Island. [1]

This prediction was fulfilled when the Very Rev. Archimandrite Gerasim Schmaltz came to live there. Fr. Gerasim left his native town of Aleksin not far from Tula and entered the Pustyn of St. Tikhon of Kaluga. This beautifully-located hermitage-monastery was founded in the 15th century by a hermit, St. Tikhon, who at first lived there alone in the hollow of a great oak tree and dug a well, the waters of which became wonderworking. It flourished in the 16th century and became well known again late in the 19th century thanks to Optina Monastery, with which there was a constant contact. It was here that Fr. Herman's student, Fr. Sergey Yanovsky, became a monk and died in 1876.

Fr. Gerasim left St. Tikhon's Monastery in 1915 and on May 4th arrived in New York. He came as a missionary for the Russian Church and spent his first years in New York as the Bishop's helper, and then in Chicago where he served as a priest. In 1916 he came with Bishop Philip to Sitka, Alaska, and in 1917 to Afognak Island north of Kodiak where he served as a priest for many years.

Fr Gerasim visited Spruce Island for the first time in 1927, and it was then that Fr. Herman called him. It was on May 27 (May 14 according to the Julian Calendar used by the Church), soon after the Radiant Feast of Easter. It was a quiet, sunny morning. He was accompanied by Archpriest Nicholas Kashevarov and two female pilgrims. It took them an hour and a half to arrive by boat. On the site of the hut where Father Herman had lived, and which had now completely disintegrated, there stood only a wooden memorial. A little farther on there was a church over the grave of the blessed Starets, and there Fr. Gerasim served a panikhida. It was a glorious day, spring birds were singing, and Fr. Gerasim liked the spot very much; it didn't seem like Alaska, but rather like some monastery in Russia. On the way back they again came to the clearing in the woods where Father Herman had lived and where, on his death-bed, he had shone with the light of Mt. Tabor, his cell being filled with the fragrance of heavenly incense. While his companions

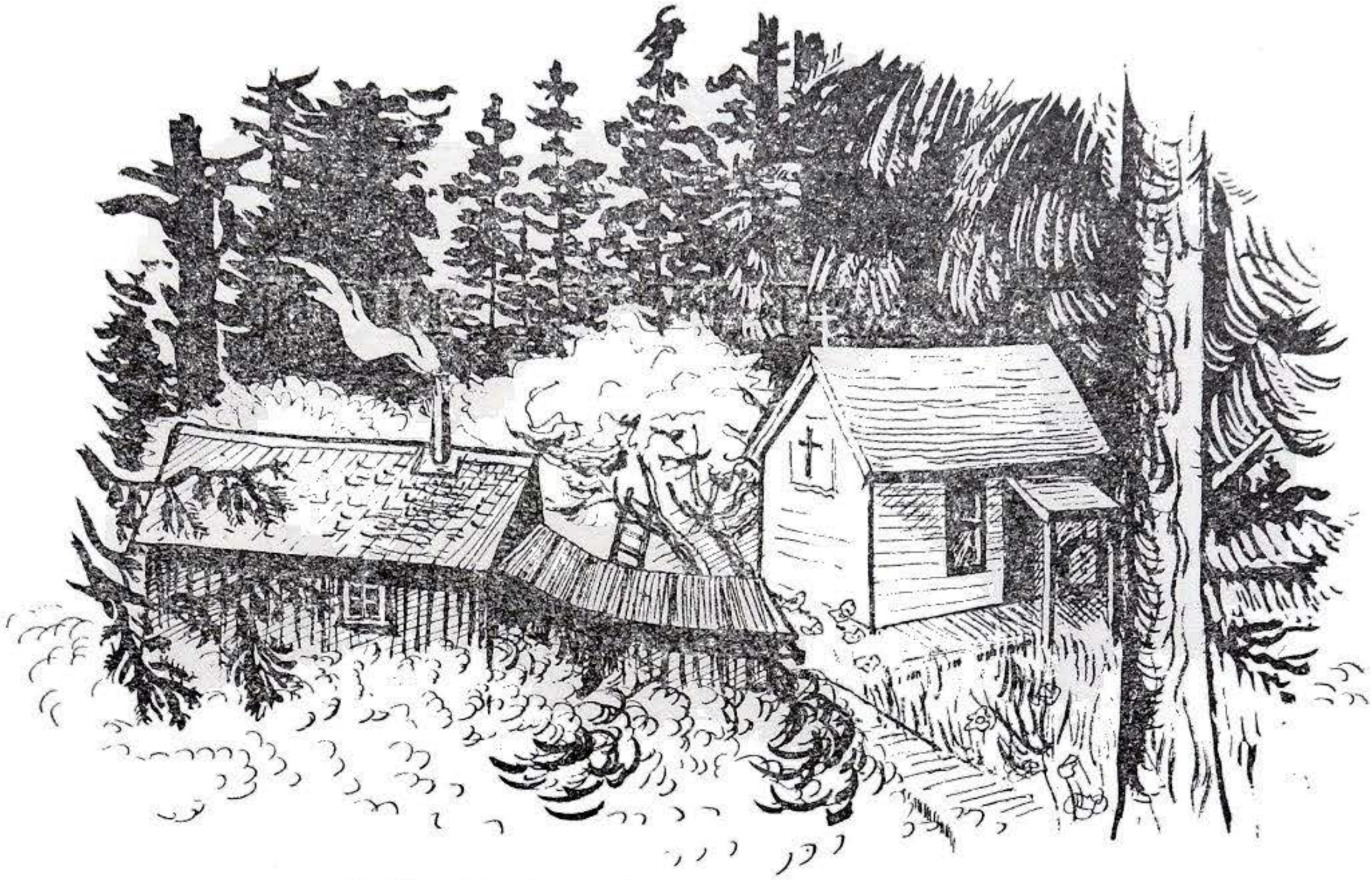
1. *Outline of the History of the American Orthodox Mission* (in Russian), Valaam Monastery, St. Petersburg, 1894, p. 179.

went on ahead, Fr. Gerasim got down on his knees and, overwhelmed with joy, exclaimed: "Christ is risen, Father Herman!" And suddenly he sensed in the air a marvellous fragrance of incense surrounding him. He even shuddered. He thought that it might have come from the cassock of Fr. Nicholas, but the latter was dressed in an overcoat and was already too far away. And the aroma was such a fine one, and so pleasant! With a quiet joy in his heart he then addressed the Starets as if he were alive: "I thank you, dear Starets, Father Herman, that you have found me worthy to visit this beloved spot of yours! Father Herman,-- I too have fallen dearly in love with this spot; if there should come a time when I will be able to come here to you to stay -- accept me!" And Father Herman fulfilled his wish. Within nine years he had moved into the hermitage for good. But before that he had yet to suffer much.

When it became known that Fr. Gerasim was preparing to go to the island to live, the local clergy opposed this and resolved to prevent it. Vassily Skvortsov, who had intended to accompany Fr. Gerasim, came to him in Afognak and informed him that they were going to expel them from the hermitage with the aid of the police. He himself, out of fear, had decided not to go. Fr. Gerasim was very much affected by this, but he replied that if it wasn't going to be pleasing to Father Herman, then that's how it was going to be. He was so disturbed about it that before going to bed he hadn't even strength enough to say his prayers.

And then he had a dream, in which he was walking somewhere through a beautiful forest: spruce trees, in the distance a hill and straight ahead a clearing with tall grass. And he heard someone pealing a bell and its sound joyfully echoing somewhere nearby. In the clearing he saw two bushy little spruce trees, and between them a monk of small stature with a thin little beard and wearing a small monk's cap. He smiled and greeted Fr. Gerasim, saying: "It is I who am here ringing the Easter bells." And then kindly: "Batiushka,[1] don't be sad! It is Father S--y who stirs people against you. Have patience and all will pass!..." At this the dream ended. In the morning Fr. Gerasim got up joyfully and resolved that there was no one to fear if Father Herman was with him. Following the advice of blessed Herman, he safely moved to Spruce Island on September 8, 1935. And he has been living there ever since,

1. "Little father": the affectionate name by which Russians address their priests.



On the right is the chapel built on the site of the hut in which Father Herman died amid the fragrance of heavenly incense, and where a century later Fr. Gerasim was surrounded by the same fragrance.

alone on the almost uninhabited island among the age-old spruce trees and gloomy storms.

Besides Father Gerasim there has been no one on the island since the death of Blessed Herman who has ever lived there so long. This gives us grounds to consider Fr. Gerasim as the very monk "fleeing worldly glory", about whom the Wonderworker of Alaska prophesied more than a hundred years ago.

During my pilgrimage to Father Herman's grave, Father Gerasim himself dictated all this information to me, on the twenty-seventh day of August in the year of our Lord 1961.

Gleb Podmoshensky.

In May of this year Father Gerasim will celebrate the 50th anniversary of his service as a missionary priest in America.

THE ANNUNCIATION

OF THE MOST HOLY MOTHER OF GOD

MARCH 25

Today is the beginning of our salvation and the revelation of the mystery which is from eternity. The Son of God becomes the Son of the Virgin, and Gabriel announces the good tidings of grace. Let us therefore cry out with him to the Mother of God, Rejoice, Thou that art full of grace, the Lord is with Thee.

Tone 4

Troparion of the Feast

HE ANNUNCIATION of the Most Holy Mother of God is one of the oldest of Christian feasts. Already in the 4th century it was celebrated as a major feast, and in the 5th and 6th centuries, owing to the spread of heresies which demeaned the person of the Mother of God and thus altered the dogma of the Incarnation, the Church augmented the splendor of the Feast by adding many hymns which revealed the mystery of the Incarnation and the greatness of the Mother of God. The icon of the Feast existed even earlier: in the Roman catacombs there is an image of the Annunciation that dates to the beginning of the 2nd century. This icon, it should be noted, differs only in small details from contemporary icons of the Annunciation, so constant has the Orthodox iconographic tradition been.

The Annunciation is first in the order of the Twelve Great Feasts, being, as the troparion indicates, "the beginning of our salvation." The Resurrection of our Lord is the end and crown of Christian feasts, the proof of salvation; but it, like every other feast of our Lord and the Most Holy Virgin, presupposes the Annunciation,-- the "good tidings" (as both the Greek and the Slavonic name for the Feast may be translated) of the Incarnation of the Son of God for the salvation of mankind.

The historical facts upon which the Feast is based are narrated in the Gospel of St. Luke, 1:26-38. It is possible to distinguish in this account two emphases: the message itself, and the response of Her to Whom the message was addressed. The message itself is an awesome, an overwhelming one. The event for which the whole of human history had been only an introduction, the event which the prophets had seen only darkly,-- is here for the first time clearly spoken to human ears: the Virgin Conception of the Son of God. In two thousand years this message has become familiar to all peoples and is now largely taken for granted, even if it is not often understood; but when it was first announced it was not every ear that could have listened to such a strange message, let alone believed it. Only the greatest holiness could have borne such tidings, and it is indeed only to the holy that God speaks. In the response of the Mother of God we find already many of the qualities by which the Church recognizes in Her a sanctity above that of any saint.

Underlying all the rest is the purity of Her Who had been consecrated in Her childhood to the service of God and had spent Her whole life in preparation for Her Divine calling; without this preparation She could not have been chosen to be the Mother of God, nor would She have known what to reply had She been chosen. There is the profound humility of Her Who, at the salutation of the Angel, "Rejoice, Thou that art full of grace, the Lord is with Thee," was so far from thinking Herself deserving of such words that She was "greatly troubled" at them. There is the spiritual prudence and soberness of mind of Her Who did not immediately accept even the words of the Angel of God (in contrast to Eve, who was easily deceived by the serpent), but asked of him an explanation of something that was beyond nature ("How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?"). There is the perfect obedience to the will of God of Her Who, when She clearly saw what was to be and what was asked of Her, offered neither murmur nor unnecessary comment, but replied simply, "Behold, the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto Me according to thy word."

And thus, in the striking phrase of Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow, "the word of the creature brought the Creator down into the world." Human nature was raised to a dignity above that of the angels by God's decision to become a man; and already the sanctity of Her Who was to give birth to Him offered proof of this dignity in Her very acceptance of His decision. God's will cannot become operative in man without the latter's acceptance; where the two coincide there is the life of grace, which was lived supremely by Her Who, in all simplicity and humility, agreed to be the vehicle for "the revelation of the mystery which is from eternity."

The icon of the Annunciation illustrates all of this most succinctly. The Archangel Gabriel is usually depicted in swift motion, just descended from heaven; in his left hand is a staff, indicating his role of messenger, and his right hand is stretched out to the Mother of God, communicating his message to Her. The Mother of God is depicted either sitting or standing, holding in Her left hand usually yarn or (more rarely) a scroll, with which She was occupied when the Angel appeared. In Her attitude any of three separate reactions may be seen, or (as in the icon shown here) all three may be shown together: surprise, revealed in face and gesture, and in the left hand clasping the yarn, which has dropped down; prudence and caution, revealed in the right hand which

She raises as if to protect Herself from the extraordinary message, lest it be a deception; and obedience and consent, depicted by Her bowed head and sometimes by Her right hand pressed to Her breast. The small sphere often depicted at the top center of the icon represents heaven, and the rays issuing from it the action of the Holy Spirit; often a single ray projects from this sphere towards the Mother of God, and sometimes the Holy Spirit is depicted on it in the form of a white dove. The stylized architectural forms in the background seem to do no more than depict the event as occurring indoors. The emphases of the icon are exactly those of the Gospel narrative: the message from Above, and the prudent yet obedient response of the Mother of God.

Of the many icons of this Feast, several have become renowned as miraculous. One is in the Moscow Kremlin, in the Church of the Annunciation which was built around a prison-tower, on the outside wall of which an icon of the Annunciation miraculously appeared in connection with the rescue by the Mother of God of a prisoner in the reign of Ivan the Terrible. Another is located in the great Cathedral of the Dormition (Uspensky) in Moscow; it was originally located in the city of Ustyug and was the icon before which the Holy Fool for Christ Prokopy prayed in the year 1290 to save the city from destruction. It is perhaps not generally realized that one of the best-known of the miraculous icons of Greece, that of Tinos, is precisely an icon of the Annunciation; but it deserves a separate article in itself.

The Feast of the Annunciation falls almost always in Great Lent, and only rarely on one of the first days of Easter week. Nonetheless it is always celebrated festively, with the Liturgy either of St. John Chrysostom or St. Basil the Great; and, unless it falls in Passion Week, it is one of the two days in Great Lent -- the other being Palm Sunday -- on which the strict fast is relaxed to permit the eating of fish.

Eugene Rose.

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CHRISTIANS!
YOU MUST KNOW CHRIST!

By BISHOP IGNATY BRIANCHANINOV

One of the great Church fathers of the 19th century, Bishop Ignaty played the very important role of spokesman for uncompromising Orthodox Christianity to the Russian intelligentsia, who had departed so far from Christian truth as to be incapable of distinguishing it from error and heresy. The following letter[1] offers a refreshing antidote to some of the confusions of the apologists for a diluted Christianity -- in our own day as well as in his.

HERE IS A spectacle worthy of bitter lamentation: Christians who do not know in what Christianity consists! Yet one encounters this spectacle almost everywhere one looks today; rarely, in the great multitude of those who call themselves Christians, can one find anyone who is a Christian both in name and in deed.

I will answer the question you have raised point by point, in as few words as possible. "Why," you write, "cannot pagans, Moslems, and so-called heretics be saved? There are excellent people among them. To condemn these good people would be contrary to the Divine mercy! ...Indeed, it is even contrary to sound human reason. -- Heretics, after all, are Christians just the same. To consider oneself saved, and the members of other faiths damned, is both foolish and extremely proud!"

Christians! You reason about salvation, yet you do not know what salvation is, why men are in need of it, and finally, you do not know Christ, the only means of our salvation. Here is the true teaching on this subject, the teaching of the Holy Ecumenical Church.

1. No. 28 of the "Letters to Laymen" in Vol. 4 of the complete *Works* of Bp. Ignaty, 2nd ed., St. Petersburg, 1886; the title here was added by the translators. Bp. Ignaty is discussed briefly above in Prof. Kontsevich's article, pp. 45-46.

Salvation consists in the recovery of communion with God. This communion was lost by the whole human race when our ancestors fell into sin. The whole human race belongs to a category of doomed creatures. Damnation is the lot of all people, whether virtuous or evil-doers. We are conceived in iniquity and born in sin. *I will go down to my son mourning to hell* (Gen. 37:35), said the holy patriarch Jacob of himself and his holy son Joseph the chaste and fair. It is not only sinners who descended into hell at the end of their earthly pilgrimage, but the righteous men of the Old Testament as well. Such is the power of the good works of men; such is the worth of the virtues of our fallen nature!

In order to restore man's communion with God, in other words for salvation, redemption was necessary. The redemption of the human race was accomplished not by an angel, not by an archangel, not by some other of the higher but still limited and created beings,-- it was accomplished by the infinite God Himself. Execution was the lot of the human race, commuted by His execution; the insufficiency of human merit was compensated by His endless worth. All the feeble good works of men, which lead to hell, are compensated by a single powerful good work: faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. The Jews asked the Lord: *What must we do, that we may work the works of God?* And the Lord answered them: *This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him Whom He hath sent* (St. John 6:29). One good work is necessary to us for salvation: faith; but faith is work! By faith, and by faith alone, may we enter into communion with God, with the aid of the sacraments which He has granted us.

You are quite wrong, then, if you think and say that good people among pagans and Moslems are saved, that is, enter into communion with God! You are quite wrong if you look upon the opposite view as some kind of novelty, as some kind of error that has crept in! No! Such has been the constant teaching of the true Church of the Old Testament as well as of the New. The Church has always acknowledged but one means to salvation: the Redeemer. She acknowledges that the greatest virtues of fallen nature lead to hell. If the righteous men of the true Church, the lamps from which the Holy Spirit has shone, prophets and wonder-workers who believed in the coming Redeemer but died before His coming,-- if they descended to hell, how can you think that pagans and Moslems who have neither acknowledged nor believed in the Redeemer, but just because they seem good to you, have attained the salvation that is attainable by one means and one means alone, faith in the Redeemer?

Christians! You must know Christ! You must realize that you do not know Him, that you deny Him if you acknowledge salvation possible without Him for any kind of good works! He who acknowledges salvation to be possible without Christ denies Christ and, perhaps without knowing it, falls into the grave sin of blasphemy. *We reckon therefore that a man is justified by faith apart from the works of the law*, says the holy Apostle Paul (Rom. 3:28). *The righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ unto all them that believe; for there is no distinction. For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God; being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus* (Rom. 3:22-24). You reply: "The holy Apostle James without any question asks for good works; he teaches that faith without works is dead." But consider just what it is that the holy Apostle James asks for.

You will see that he, like all the Divinely-inspired writers of the Holy Scriptures, asks for works of faith, and not the good works of our fallen nature. He asks for living faith, confirmed by the works of the new man, and not the good works of fallen nature, which are repulsive to faith. He cites the conduct of the patriarch Abraham -- a work in which the faith of that righteous man was revealed. This work consisted in offering as a sacrifice to God his only-begotten son. To slay one's son for sacrifice is not by any means a good work according to human nature; it is, rather, a good work insofar as it fulfills a Divine command -- it is a work of faith. Look into the New Testament and into the Holy Scriptures in general, and you will find that they ask for the fulfillment of God's commands, that this fulfillment is called works, that from this fulfillment of God's commands faith in God becomes living, being active; without it, faith is dead, being deprived of any activity. And on the contrary you will find that the good works of fallen nature, whether from feelings, from blood, from impulse, or from a tender sentiment of the heart -- are forbidden and rejected! And these are the same good works that please you in pagans and Moslems; for these, even if they involve the denial of Christ, you want to give them salvation!

Your conception of sound reason is a strange one. How, by what right, do you find and recognize this in yourself? If you are a Christian, you should have a Christian understanding of this subject, and not some other arbitrary opinion taken from nowhere. The Gospel teaches us that by the fall we acquired a falsifying reason; that the reason of our fallen nature, no matter what its innate worth, no matter how well sharpened by worldly learning, retains the worth transmitted to it by the fall and

remains a falsifying reason. We must reject it and commit ourselves to the guidance of faith; under such guidance, in due time, through much effort in piety, God will give to His true slave a reason of truth, or spiritual reason. This reason we can and must acknowledge as a sound reason; it is an informed faith, as the Apostle Paul excellently described it in the 11th chapter of his epistle to the Hebrews. The foundation of spiritual reasoning is God. Being founded on this hard rock, it does not waver nor fall. What you call sound reason we Christians take to be a reason so infirm, so darkened and so far gone astray, that there can be no healing for it except by cutting off, with the sword of faith, and renouncing all the learning that has gone into its formation. If we take it for a sound reason, basing ourselves on a foundation that is uncertain, tottering, indefinite, constantly changing-- then it, being sound, will renounce Christ too. This is proved by experience.

And what, may I ask, does your sound reason say to you?--That the condemnation of good people who do not believe in Christ is repulsive to it! And not only that; such a condemnation of virtuous people is contrary to the mercy of such an all-good Being as God.

To be sure, you had a revelation from above on this subject, concerning what is contrary and what is not contrary to Divine mercy? --No, it was sound reason that pointed it out. Ah, your sound reason! Still, where in your sound reason did you find out that it was possible to understand, with your own limited human mind, what is contrary and what is not contrary to the Divine mercy? Permit us to speak our mind.

The Gospel -- that is, the teaching of Christ, that is, the Holy Scriptures, that is, the Holy Ecumenical Church -- has revealed to us all that man may know of the Divine mercy, which surpasses every kind of reasoning and all human apprehension, and is inaccessible to these. Vain is the trifling of the human mind when it seeks to define the indefinable God, when it seeks to explain the inexplicable, to submit to its own calculations...whom?...God! Such an undertaking is a satanic one.

Oh, these people who call themselves Christians and do not know the teaching of Christ! If from this blessed, heavenly teaching you people have not learned the incomprehensibility of God,-- then go to school and listen to what the children are taught! The teachers of mathematics explain, in the theory of the infinite, that it, as an indefinite quantity, is not subject to the laws to which definite quantities, numbers, are subject, that when you calculate with it you may get a result completely

at variance with that arrived at through calculating with numbers. And you wish to define the laws by which the Divine mercy acts; you say, this is in accord with it, that is against it! It is in accord or not in accord with your sound reason, with your understanding and feelings!

Does it follow from this that God is obliged to understand and feel as you understand and feel? Yet this is what you are demanding of God! What a foolish and prideful undertaking! Do not accuse the Church's judgement of a lack of common sense and humility -- it is your own lack. She, the holy Church, merely follows unswervingly the Divine teaching on the acts of God, revealed by God Himself. Her true children follow her obediently, scorning the puffed-up reason that rises up against God. We believe that we can know about God only what God deigns to reveal to us. If there had been a different path to the knowledge of God, a path which our mind could have cleared for itself with its own powers, revelation would not have been given us. It was given because it was necessary for us. Vain and deceitful, then, are the personal opinions and wanderings of the human mind.

You say, "heretics are Christians just the same." Where did you take that from? Perhaps someone or other, calling himself a Christian while knowing nothing of Christ, may in his extreme ignorance decide to acknowledge himself as the same kind of Christian as heretics, and fail to distinguish the holy Christian faith from those offspring of the curse, blasphemous heresies. Quite otherwise, however, do true Christians reason about this. A whole multitude of saints has received a martyr's crown, has preferred the most cruel and prolonged tortures, prison, exile, rather than agree to take part with heretics in their blasphemous teaching.

The Ecumenical Church has always recognized heresy as a mortal sin; she has always recognized that the man infected with the terrible malady of heresy is spiritually dead, a stranger to grace and salvation, in communion with the devil and the devil's damnation. Heresy is a sin of the mind; it is more a diabolic than a human sin. It is the devil's offspring, his invention; it is an impiety that is near to idol-worship.

Every heresy contains in itself blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, whether against the dogma or against the action of the Holy Spirit. The essence of every heresy is blasphemy. St. Flavian, Patriarch of Constantinople, who sealed with blood his confession of the true faith, pronounced the decision of a local council held in Constantinople on the

heresiarch Eutyches in the following words:

> Eutyches, until now priest and archimandrite, is entirely convicted, both by his past actions and by his present statements on the errors of Valentine and Apollinarius, whose blasphemy he obstinately follows, all the more so as he did not even listen to our advice and instructions directed to his reception of sound teaching. And therefore, weeping and sighing over his complete damnation, we proclaim before the face of our Lord Jesus Christ that he has fallen into blasphemy, that he is deprived of every priestly rank, of communion with us, and of the direction of his monastery, and we give it to be known to all that from henceforth whoever shall converse with him or visit him shall himself incur excommunication.

This decree is a sample of the common mind of the Ecumenical Church concerning heretics; this decree was acknowledged by the whole Church, being ratified by the Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon. The heresy of Eutyches consisted in his failure to confess in Christ in His Incarnation two natures, as the Church confesses; he admitted only one Divine nature.

You will say: is that all! One may see a mentality similar to your own in the reply of a certain person invested with worldly power to St. Alexander, Patriarch of Alexandria, concerning the Arian heresy; it is a reply ludicrous in its want of true knowledge and woeful in its nature and consequences. This person advised the Patriarch to preserve peace and not to start any quarrels, which are so contrary to the Christian spirit, just because of a few words; he wrote that he found nothing reprehensible in the teaching of Arius, -- a certain difference in the turns of phrases, -- that is all! These turns of phrases, as the historian Flerius notes, in which there is nothing reprehensible, reject the Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ -- that is all! They overthrow, that is to say, the whole Christian faith -- that is all! It is remarkable that all the ancient heresies, behind various changing masks, strove toward a single aim: they rejected the Divinity of the Word and mutilated the dogma of the Incarnation. The more modern heresies above all strive to reject the action of the Holy Spirit: with terrible blasphemies they have rejected the Divine Liturgy, all the sacraments, everything, everything in which the Ecumenical Church has always acknowledged the action of the Holy Spirit. They call all this human ordinances -- even bolder: superstition, error! To be sure, in heresy you see neither robbery nor theft; perhaps it is only because of this that you do not consider it a sin? Here they reject the Son of God, there they reject and blaspheme the Holy Spirit -- that is all! A man who has received and upholds a blasphemous teaching and

utters blasphemy, but does not thieve, does not steal, and even does the good works of fallen nature -- he is an excellent man! How can God refuse him salvation!... The whole reason for this final perplexity of yours, as well as for all the rest, is a profound ignorance of Christianity!

Do not think that such ignorance is a defect of small importance. It is not! Its consequences can be fatal, especially now when any number of books with a satanic teaching are circulating under a Christian title. In ignorance of true Christian teaching, just like that you can take a false, blasphemous idea for a true one, appropriate it to yourself, and together with it appropriate eternal damnation as well. The blasphemer will not be saved! And the perplexities you have expressed in your letter are already terrible omens regarding your salvation; their essence is rejection of Christ! Do not play with your salvation! Do not play with it, or you will weep forever.

Occupy yourself with the reading of the New Testament and the holy Fathers of the Orthodox Church (but by no means Teresa, nor Francis and the other madmen[1] of the West whom their heretical Church passes off for saints!); study in the holy Fathers of the Orthodox Church how to understand Scripture aright, study there what kind of living, what kind of thoughts and feelings are fitting for a Christian. From Scripture and living faith study Christ and Christianity. Before the terrible hour comes in which you will have to appear before God in judgement, acquire the justification given by God freely to all men through Christianity.

1. This term is by no means carelessly employed by Bishop Ignaty. In his essay on *prelest* or spiritual deception, he points out how the loss of spiritual discrimination in the Church of Rome has led in many cases to the confusion of psychic fantasies with genuine spiritual attainment. This essay will be presented in due time in *The Orthodox Word* (*trans. note*).

ORTHODOXY IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD

CANONIZATION AND NEW MIRACLES OF FATHER JOHN OF KRONSTADT

October 31 - November 1, 1964

1. THE SERVICE OF CANONIZATION

News of the approaching canonization service for Father John of Kronstadt spread quickly in the Russian Orthodox colony in New York City. On Saturday, Oct. 18 (31), near the time designated for the last panikhida, the Synodal Cathedral was full of worshippers, and they brought with them a common religious exaltation that shone in their faces.

"My joy, in the midst of summer they will begin to celebrate Easter," resounds the already-accomplished prophecy of St. Seraphim concerning the uncovering of his relics in July of 1903 when, as pilgrims who were present then at Sarov testify, the spiritual exaltation among the worshippers was like that at Easter! ...Similarly, the panikhida and the service that followed it in honor of the newly-revealed Saint of God, the holy righteous John, Wonderworker of Kronstadt, might be called an Easter celebrated in the midst of late autumn!...

For the panikhida the First Hierarch of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, Metropolitan Philaret, came out; cocelebrating with him were Archbishop Nikon and clergy from nearby parishes and Holy Trinity Monastery.

For the last time prayers were said for the repose of the soul of Archpriest John of eternal memory, whose image, still covered by a shroud, stood behind the panikhida table with its brightly-burning candles...

The solemn "Exaltation" sung to the new Saint soon filled the whole church, and at the same moment the shroud that had covered the magnificent face of St. John was removed. His invisible presence warmed our hearts with such joy the whole time! (Those who attended this service in the city of Utica testify that at the moment when the face of the Saint was uncovered, after the icon had been brought to the center of the church for the "Exaltation," in the sight of all the lamp on the panikhida table went out -- a sign truly marvellous in its simplicity, beauty, and conclusiveness! And this in the center of teeming modernism, in the State of New York in North America, in the second half of the twentieth century!)

After the reading of the Gospel, the veneration of it and the icon of St. John continued to the end of the All-night Vigil Service. The dismissal delivered by the Metropolitan was as follows: "May Christ our true God, Who rose from the dead, through the prayers of His Most Pure Mother, the holy Prophet of God Joel, the holy Martyr Uar, our father St.

John of Ryla, and our righteous father St. John, Wonderworker of Kronstadt and *All Russia*, have mercy on us and save us, for He is good and the Lover of mankind"; and it was given not to an empty, but to an overflowing church -- no one wanted to part from John, the Wonderworker of *All Russia*.

At the beginning of the Liturgy, which started at exactly ten o'clock, His Beatitude Metropolitan Anastassy presiding, the church was even fuller; the great, historic, holy day which the Russian Orthodox Church was experiencing touched all, from the small to the great.

Despite the fact that the church was full to overflowing, one did not feel any jostling or press...nor any time; order, which organized itself spontaneously, extended also to those outside the church; the whole day long crowds of Russians thronged outside, having totally forgotten, for the time, that they were outside of Russia, in the center of New York.

Toward the end of the Liturgy clergy from parishes in New York and neighboring States began to gather. At the moleben celebrated at the conclusion of the Liturgy forty members of the clergy were present. One's heart sank when, for the first time, all forty began to sing--"Holy Righteous Father John, pray to God for us," and even more when the choir and the whole people repeated it.

After this service, I think, all were convinced that John was indeed a Great Wonderworker, not only of Kronstadt, but also of All Russia and of all Russia-in-exile.

Archimandrite Cyprian (Pyzhov).

2. A MIRACULOUS HEALING ON THE DAY OF CANONIZATION

The priest who relates the following miracle was afflicted by a severe swelling and infection in his left foot as a result of having stepped on a nail over a year earlier. On the eve of Fr. John's canonization he celebrated a Vigil service and akathist in his own church in New Brunswick, N.J.; at the conclusion of the Liturgy next morning, he went to the Synodal Cathedral in New York City.

By the time I had reached the subway, and from the subway to the cathedral, my foot began to ache so much that I could hardly stand. During the moleben I fervently begged healing for my affliction. When almost everyone had left the cathedral I went once more to the icon of the Righteous John and again prayed fervently for healing. At the banquet the foot stopped aching. I somehow got up the courage to step on this foot confidently. I made the trip back completely well. The swelling became pale and began gradually to subside; it felt as if something had burst there, and here I had been about to undergo a serious operation, and possibly amputation.

I consider it my duty to relate this miracle accomplished through the prayers of St. John of Kronstadt, witnessed by Dr. Leonid Stephi and many parishioners.

Orth. Rus., Nov. 28, 1964 *Fr. John Karas.*

3. MIRACULOUS RENEWAL OF AN ICON

In a black and white photograph owned by Anna Olsufeva *in San Francisco, the head of Fr. John became gradually, in the months just before the canonization, surrounded by an aureole of light, noticed also by others. On the day of the canonization the image was blessed and exposed for veneration by Fr. Leonid Upshinsky in the church of St. Tikhon Zadonsky in San Francisco.*

From *Orthodox Russia, Nov. 14, 1964*

NEW BOOKS

ORTHODOXY 1964. A PAN-ORTHODOX SYMPOSIUM. Edited by the Brotherhood of Theologians *Zoe*. Athens, 1964. 444pp.

Each of the 26 essays by different Orthodox writers collected in this volume is devoted to an historical or descriptive treatment of the Orthodox Church in a single country. Most countries with a sizable Orthodox population are represented, from the older Orthodox nations of Eastern Europe and the Near East to the modern missionary lands of America, Western Europe, Africa, Australia, and the Far East.

The essays are quite diverse in quality and interest. A number of them succeed in presenting a brief history and a general view of the present state of Orthodoxy in the country which is treated. Among these one may single out Timothy Ware's essay on Orthodoxy in England, written in a lively style and with an objective view of the present problems of Orthodoxy in the light of its little-known history in England; Nikita Struve's essay on the current situation of the Russian Church (taken from his book, *Les Chretiens en U.R.S.S.*), where one is relieved to read an accurate and realistic view of the present persecutions, with special attention to the satanic tactics and plan of the Soviet government; the essays on Orthodoxy in Japan and Alaska (attributed only to the Review *Porefthendes*), which are of interest chiefly for their historical accounts, one of the character and activity of the great missionary, Bishop Nicholas Kassatkin, the other of the early Russian mission to Alaska; and the brief reports on the remarkable and seemingly spontaneous growth of Orthodoxy in East Africa in recent years. There are other essays of interest as well, and almost all are of value at least for the facts they present.

One must take decided exception, however, to several essays. Several of the articles devoted to countries behind the Iron Curtain are furnished with heavy-handed apologies for Communist regimes: the essays on Bulgaria, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia are worst in this regard. Two other articles, those of Nicholas Zernov on "The Challenge of Exile," and Fr. Stephen Upson on "The Challenge of America," seem to be no more than vehicles for the arbitrary opinions and radical reforms proposed by the authors in the interests of a facile "adaptation" to modern conditions.

The presence of such essays leads one to question the success of the volume as a whole. According to the introduction, it was the purpose of the book to be something more than a miscellaneous collection of essays; it was to be "an attempt to bear witness of contemporary Orthodoxy all over the world." This attempt, one must say in all honesty, is not successful; but one must say yet more: it *could* not succeed. For the assumption underlying the attempt is a questionable one: that Orthodoxy today is one, that the differences and disagreements among

the diverse people who call themselves Orthodox are non-essential.

On the contrary, the differences--some of them--are quite essential. To take an example: the recognition of an Orthodox Church in a Communist-dominated country might seem at first sight to be a question simply of canon law, or even of pure politics; but a closer look at the statements of, for example, the hierarchy of the Moscow Patriarchate, containing as they do an increasingly open chiliasm in conformity with Communist doctrine as well as a cruel denial of the suffering and martyrdom of their own flocks, is enough to convince anyone with a faithful Orthodox consciousness that communion with such hierarchs is not possible, if Orthodox doctrine and Christian martyrdom still have any meaning.

To take another example: there are people who call themselves Orthodox who distinguish, on purely rationalist grounds, the "essential" from the "accidental" in Orthodoxy, and under the pretext of preserving the "essential", propose (as do N. Zernov and Fr. Upson between them) such radical innovations as a married episcopacy, a revised or even completely reformed calendar (the revised calendar virtually abolishing the Fast of Peter and Paul, and any reformed calendar abrogating the canon regarding the date of Easter), a radical shortening of services and introduction of pews in churches, and a new kind of monastic life "in accordance with the American standard of living" (Fr. Upson's own words!). Here, quite clearly, living Orthodox tradition is swallowed up in rationalism, pragmatism, ...and the love of comfort.

Any unity between, on the one hand, Orthodox modernists and those who lend themselves to the purposes of an anti-Christian government, and on the other hand those who would strive to be faithful to Orthodoxy in all its fullness and depth, in small points as well as large--can only be an external unity. The painful truth is that Orthodoxy today is not one. There is faithful Orthodoxy, and there is a "new Orthodoxy" which by slow but sure steps is leaving the true Church in pursuit of...what?

A phrase has recently come into intellectual fashion among many both within and without the Christian Churches--atheists being particularly fond of it. It is utilized in this very book by the author of the article on the Czechoslovakian Church: "Our Church has not the character of a militant Church. Its guiding ideal is 'Peace on Earth.'" Perhaps such is the character of some Churches today; but surely if it were possible to capture in a single phrase exactly what the Church of Christ is *not*, no better words could have been chosen. "Peace on Earth" is the rallying cry of a humanity that has lost Christ and has turned Christianity into its opposite, in total forgetfulness of the spiritual warfare and the war with evil in which every true Christian is constantly engaged, and of the very words of our Saviour, Who came to bring not "peace on earth," but "division" (St. Luke 12:51).

Communication between Orthodox of different nations is all to be desired; the intention underlying *Orthodoxy 1964* is certainly a commendable one. But it is not enough to present a united Orthodox front to the world, or to suppose that the name of Orthodox guarantees the genuine unity of those who bear it. Orthodox unity can be grounded only in pure, uncompromising Orthodox faith, and an intense cultivation of the Chistian spiritual life which, it must be sadly admitted, is virtually extinct in the world today. In ignorance of this spiritual life the world today dreams of a universal "peace," "welfare," and "unity" which have nothing to do with Christianity; as against this what Orthodox must give is the witness of a life in Christ, of a life whose end and aim is not on earth but in heaven. This, and nothing else, is the true "witness of contemporary Orthodoxy."

Eugene Rose.

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